

CITY OF NEWTON

BOARD OF ALDERMEN

TRAFFIC COUNCIL REPORT

Tuesday, March 1, 2005

Members Present: Candace Havens (Chair), David Koses (Transportation Planner), Sgt. Norcross (Police), Christine Samuelson (Aldermanic Representative), Clint Schuckel (Traffic Engineer)

Aldermen Present: Harney, Lennon, Linsky, Merrill

#HP-1 COMMISSIONER OF PARKS & RECREATION requesting permission to put two (2) handicapped parking spaces on Bowen Street, Newton Centre (Ward 6).

ACTION: **APPROVED 5-0**

NOTE: Clint Schuckel and representatives from Parks and Recreation, Judy Dore and Stephanie Pelkowsky described plans for improvements to the adjacent park that will accommodate people of all abilities. They felt that handicapped parking on Bowen Street was the most convenient location for such access. Clint Schuckel noted that approval of such spaces should be contingent upon completion of the proposed ramping and pathways to assure safe use of the spaces. The Traffic Council voted (5-0) to approve the spaces in locations proposed on plans.

#HP-2 BRUCE CROWLEY, 10 Ricker Road, requiring removal of HANDICAPPED PARKING SPACE at #10-12 RICKER ROAD (no longer needed) (Ward 1).

ACTION: **APPROVED 5-0**

NOTE: Clint Schuckel confirmed that the previous user of the space has moved and nobody in the vicinity parks in it. The Traffic Council recommended approval of its removal (5-0).

#292-03(2) TRAFFIC ENGINEER requesting a “No Parking” zone be created at #26-31 LENGLEN ROAD to facilitate emergency vehicle access(Ward 1).

ACTION: **APPROVED (5-0)**

NOTE: Clint Schuckel indicated that the Fire Department requested this change so it would be easier to navigate a Fire truck around the bend with no parking on the inside radius. On the Fire Chief’s recommendation, the Traffic Council voted to recommend approval of the request (5-0).

#227-04 ALD. MERRILL, on behalf of HILARY MONBOUQUETTE-PELTZ, 63 Charlesbank Road, Newton Corner, requesting lower speed limit and crosswalk on CHARLSEBANK ROAD near Remick Terrace (Ward 1).

ACTION: **NAN 5-0**

NOTE: Ald. Merrill and Hillary Monbouquette-Peltz presented the request. They noted that Charlesbank Road is a very busy street that cuts through a residential

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neighborhood with many young children who try to walk to school. The conditions for crossing the street are dangerous due to the volume and speed of cars passing by. They would like a crosswalk to make it safer.

Clint Schuckel concurred that the street is very busy; about 13,200 cars per day and 1,000 per hour at peak hours travel the street. The speed limit is 30 mph and 85% of the traffic travels at 32-33 mph. As such, he was not optimistic that the State would consider lowering the speed limit. The street is narrow (18-19 feet wide and less than 10 feet wide in either direction) which may help slow traffic a bit and noted a new crosswalk would require curb cuts.

The neighbors stated they had seen a number of problems crossing the street and want some traffic calming. One resident was hit by a car while walking on the sidewalk. The affordable homes in the area are attractive to young families, but dangerous for their children. They noted enforcement helps, but not a full time option.

Ald. Samuelson noted there is a meeting on March 30, 2005 to discuss altering the intersection of Charlesbank at Nonantum, which may slow traffic. She spoke with Officer Keefe, who didn't support the proposal for a crosswalk because of the curves, slopes, and bad sight distances. She favored continuing discussion of this issue in the context of the upcoming meeting. Ald. Lennon also expressed his concern for the neighborhood and its children.

Candace Havens supported traffic calming, but in the scope of a larger solution, such as one that would include intersection redesign, pedestrian actuated lights, or other improvements to assure the traffic will slow significantly. She was concerned that the current volume of traffic would always pose a danger to pedestrians.

In light of the upcoming meeting regarding the DCR plan in which traffic and circulation issues in the area will be discussed and a similar docket item #477-04 on the Public Safety/Transportation Committee agenda, the Traffic Council voted 5-0 to recommend no action on this item.

#294-04(02) TRAFFIC ENGINEER requesting that a "No Parking" zone be modified at #97-100 GARDNER STREET to facilitate emergency vehicle access(Ward 1).

ACTION: **APPROVED 5-0**

NOTE: Henry and Carmela Borey, who live at 97 Gardner Street, were concerned about not having parking in front of their house if this request is approved.

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Clint Schuckel said parking needed to be removed from one side of the street to allow Fire trucks to make the turn; the Fire Chief recommended it be removed from the inside of the turn in front of their house. Mr. Schuckel stated the no parking area near #100 Gardner street would be as short as possible in an attempt to retain on-street parking where it does not conflict with the turning radius for fire trucks.

The Traffic Council voted (5-0) to recommend approval of the change as requested.

#344-04 THOMAS H. KOERBER, Lasell College, 1844 Commonwealth Avenue, requesting STOP SIGN at the corner of MAPLE STREET and WOODLAND ROAD (Ward 4).

ACTION: **APPROVED 5-0**

NOTE: Thomas Koerber wanted to slow traffic on Maple Street for the safety of the many pedestrians in the area, noting sometimes people breeze through the intersection endangering others. Ald. Harney reinforced the concern about driver neglect and mentioned there are both big and little students in the area, since it is near Lasell College and Bowen Elementary School.

Clint Schuckel said volumes are relatively low, but a stop sign here would clarify the right of way and warrants don't have to be met **when only the minor street is signed**. The Traffic Council voted (5-0) to recommend approval of the stop sign.

#366-04 TRICIA FABRIZIO MALKASIAN, 29 Waban Avenue requesting Stop Sign on bend of WABAN AVENUE and COLLINS AVENUE (Ward 5).

ACTION: **HELD until March 31, 2005**

NOTE: The petitioner was not present to describe her request. Clint Schuckel presented photos of the area which shows a convergence of several streets; it was not clear where a stop sign was requested. He also showed some possible street redesigns that would simplify access and make the area safer. The Traffic Council voted to hold this item (5-0) until the next meeting so the petitioner can be contacted to clarify the request.

PUBLIC HEARING

#368-04 IRENE M. UNTER, 15 Washington Park requesting REISIDENT STICKER PARKING on WASHINGTON PARK (Ward 2).

ACTION: **NAN (5-0)**

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NOTE: Clint Schuckel summarized the requirements for residential parking districts and said the criteria are not all met because the Art Center is non-residential and the use of all properties in such a district must be primarily residential. He noted there is legislation pending that could change that requirement, however at this time the area is not eligible for resident permit parking.

The petitioner was not present to explain her request. The majority of neighbors present felt the existing 3-hour restrictions on the street had improved the previous parking congestion significantly and was the result of neighborhood collaboration. The Executive Director of the Art Center expressed a willingness to continue to work with the neighbors on any problems that might arise. One neighbor supported the request, noting an unusual situation in which he shares a driveway and must rely solely on his 3 on-site parking spaces to meet all his parking needs.

The Traffic Council generally did not favor resident permit parking since existing homes have driveways and on-site parking and since the 3-hour restriction **was** working for most neighbors.

In order to allow the residents to return without prejudice at a later date in the event of a law change that would make the area eligible for resident parking, the Traffic Council voted (5-0) to recommend no action on this item.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Street width policy. Candace Havens and David Koses presented some data on street width policies in other cities. The information indicated that cities have a variety of standards for allowing and restricting parking on streets. The Council agreed their different views of such matters may create a balanced approach that allows each situation to be considered based on its unique circumstances. The Council agreed to forward the information on to Public Safety and Transportation for reference.

2. Newton Corner/Exit 17 Safety and traffic flow improvements. At the previous meeting, David Koses and Candace Havens agreed to look at ways to pursue changes to the Newton Corner interchange. Ald. Lennon also offered to participate in this effort. Since the meeting, David, **Clint Schuckel**, Ald. Lennon and Candace met with representatives of CTPS who will scope out the parameters of a study that could provide Origin/Destination information to better determine the most appropriate improvements for the area. It is possible that the MPO could

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fund such a study, though there are many other projects already in line, but the timing is good for a request for their 2006 budget. In addition, the Mass Pike Study completed in 2003 outlined some long- and short-term improvements the Mass Pike Authority had agreed to help fund. While the report notes the Authority was to initiate meetings with the City, none have occurred yet. Clint offered to prepare a list of ideas to bring to the Public Safety and Traffic Committee for consideration to help initiate further discussions with the Mass Pike. Mayor Cohen appointed Bob Rooney as the point person for the City.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:20 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Candace Havens, Chair